“The Blood of Saint Gennaro mixes with the blood shed in Palestine, in Ukraine, and in every wounded land.”

In Don Mimmo Battaglia’s homily, a heartfelt appeal to Israel to hear the cry for peace.

Brothers and sisters,

Today, Napoli is like the sea when the wind dies down. There is an inner calm, a sense of celebration, faith, and identity. The streets are like naves, the balconies are like choirs, making the city itself a cathedral. At its center, not an object, but a sign - a vial, a blood, a name - Gennaro. Here, what we celebrate is not a trophy but a living memory; that of the martyrs whom Love has not left alone. With time, the names of the oppressors are quickly forgotten. Yet time preserves the names of the victims - in the tears of the poor, the cries of the innocent, in the silence of the least fortunate. Even when their names escape us, God knows them; He has engraved them on the palms of his hands.

Today, scripture gives us a phrase that is both a gateway and a promise, “Whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it.” (Mark 8:35) This is not a motto for a poster, but a bridge between two shores. Gennaro passed over this bridge completely: his flesh surrendered, fear overcome, freedom restored to its Author. He chose not to save himself, but to give himself. The blood which his killers thought would seal his oblivion has instead become a voice. It is a voice that still preaches to the city, calling us to trust the Gospel without reservation. Let us not look to this sign with superstition, but as an invitation to commit everything to Faith.

Today, the word blood burns within us. Blood is a language we all understand and it demands accountability from us all. Gennaro’s blood mixes with the blood shed in Palestine, in Ukraine, and in every other wounded land where violence believes itself to be omnipotent, but is instead mere noise. Blood is sacred. Every innocent drop is an inverted sacrament. If I could, I would collect in a vial the blood from every victim - the children, the women, and the men of every people - and I would display it here, beneath these vaults, because no ritual absolves us of responsibility. So that through our prayers, we may feel the weight of every wound and not look away. And today, with modesty and fervor, I say: it is the blood of every child in Gaza that I would display in this cathedral next to the vial of the saint. Because there are no “other” tears: the whole earth is one altar.

From this Cathedral, which breathes as if from an ancient chest, a clear, direct appeal rises without diplomatic grace.

Israel, listen. I speak to you not as an adversary, but as a brother in humanity. I call to you using the word that scripture uses to summon all hearts to that which is essential: Listen! Stop shedding Palestinian blood.

Cease the sieges that block bread and water, cease the bombings that destroy homes and childhoods, cease the reprisals that trade security for oppression, cease the invasion that suffocates every hope for peace. Security that tramples on a people is not security: it is a fire that sooner or later burns the hand that believed it could tame it.

I know the weight of your grief, the wounds that you bear in mind and in body. Every act of terrorism is a sacrilege, every kidnapping a shadow on humanity, every rocket fired at civilians, a sin that cries out. But today – before the blood of the martyr– I call you by name, “You, Israel, stop.” Open the border crossings, let medical supplies and bread pass through. Suspend the indiscriminate shelling that multiplies orphans. I am not asking you for weakness, I am asking you for greatness. The greatness of those who restrain their strength when that strength profanes justice. Of those who recognize that the only victory that saves is the victory over revenge.
Brothers and sisters, Naples, despite its wounds, is a city of peace. And from this city overlooking the Mediterranean I would like a movement of hope and peace to be born, because as La Pira said, we must begin from the cities to unite the nations.And I would like this contagion of reconciliation to be founded on a language clear and understood by all the peoples of all the cities that face this sea with their fears and hopes.Because lies begin with words, especially ambiguous, anesthetized ones: drones are remote-controlled executions; “collateral damage” are faceless children; a military budget that exceeds education and healthcare is not security but collective suicide. Let ua convert arsenals into hospitals, war profits into scholarships, bunkers into libraries.

This is the only evangelical geopolitics worthy of the name we invoke.

Let us say it with the frankness of the saints. Evil is not an idea, it is a chain. It has offices, accountants, bonuses, and industrial plans. War does not “break out”, it is produced, financed, rewarded. Every military budget that swells like a sail is a bad wind against the flesh of the poor. Every “expansion of defense spending” that exceeds education and healthcare, does not make us safer. It makes us lonelier and poorer.

The cry of the poor and marginalized, the blood of children and the tears of their mothers, plead with the powerful of this earth – the institutions of our union, the

Knesset, governments, and every military command– “Stop the spiral!” Seek justice before borders, rights before walls, dignity before calculations. Peace is not built with checkpoints and interruptions to life, but with equal rights, mutual security, and political mercy.

The blood crying out from the rubble is not a topic of discussion. It is a question from God asking again, “What have you done with your brother?”

Sisters and brothers who sit in parliaments, I ask you, How can you choose missiles over bread? Where have you lost the face of your brothers and sisters?

Sisters and brothers who work in finance and in the major markets. I ask you, How can you rejoice when the war drags on and defense stocks rise? Do you not hear the cries of your brothers and sisters?

Sisters and brothers, entrepreneurs and shareholders whose industries distort the Gospel of work, melting plows into grenades, I ask you, What have you done with the dignity of your brothers and sisters?

And all of us, with our dormant consciences, who let pain flow like water over marble, addicted to horror, locked in the small enclosures of comfort that we want to defend at all costs, we too must ask ourselves, What have we done with our brothers and sisters?

Here in Naples, we ask this question of ourselves everyday because our city is a wounded and luminous altar where we know blood – that of lost young people, of innocent victims, and of those invisible ones who have stopped dreaming.The “Southern Question” is not a closed chapter. It is a page that demands new ink – work, school, care, culture. It does not need emergency administrators, but artisans of the future. Because politics, if it is worthy of its name, is a liturgical art – it brings order, not to adorn, but to serve.

And looking at Italy as a whole, let us see faces in place of numbers – young people clinging to precarious jobs as if to a life raft; elderly people forced to choose between medical care and food; families counting pennies as they count their breaths. It is here that we contemplate the Gospel – “I was hungry…I was thirsty… I was a stranger…” – not as a metaphor, but as an agenda.

“What can we do?”, you ask me. It is Peter’s question when the boat creaks. The martyrdom that is asked of us today is not one of blood, but of consistency. Of the stubborn meekness of those who cannot be bought. Of the creative patience of those

who educate without shortcuts. Of the faithful works of those who serve the poor without altars. Of the joyful charity of those who spend less on themselves and instead invest in those who cannot repay them. It is the martyrdom of attention – it costs more than gold.

But the Gospel does not ask us only for goodness; it asks us for justice. Justice is not resentment; it is the order of love. It is a rule that sanctifies time. It is work that does not exploit. It is a table that grows to fit more seats. It is power that does not absolve itself. Europe will not be saved by walls and cynical routes, but by remembering that it was born from monasteries and cathedrals, schools for the children of the poor, markets that closed on Sundays, communities that forged bonds. This is not nostalgia, but discipline for the future.

Let us return to the blood. Look at it. Not as a curiosity, but as a mirror. Gennaro's blood is not a talisman. It is an appeal. Every drop says, "do not betray." Do not betray the Gospel with worship without conversion. Do not betray the poor with alms without choices. Do not betray peace with words without plans. Do not betray children with schools without teachers and cities without playgrounds.

For this reason, today, we dare ask for a specific miracle. Saint Gennaro, brother and martyr, melt not only your blood – which is a sign– but also melt our hearts, where everything is decided. Disarm the fears that we disguise as prudence. Sweep away the patina of cynicism that clings to faith. Give us courage without theatrics and choices that do not make headlines, but change lives.

Look at Palestine. Look at Ukraine. Look at the Southern Hemisphere. How many have no more tears to shed. Let peace not be a slogan, but a practice. Let every community become a waiting room for resurrection – a canteen for the hungry, a door for the homeless, a voice for those who cannot speak, and companionship for those who cannot stand alone. Here in our city, under every balcony, let there be a young person with a book, not a weapon. Let every courtyard be a playground, not a place for dealing drugs. Let every honest business be worth more than those who trade in dirty money.

If we ask for a miracle today, let it be this – that the miracle begins with us. May a construction site of peace open up in each of us – an extra chair at the table, an extra hour to educate, one euro less for ourselves and one more for those who need it. When someone asks if the blood has melted, we can answer, "Yes, the blood has melted." Not only here, not only today, not only in the vial, but it has melted in our hearts. It has begun to flow again, it has brought oxygen to our hands, grace to our eyes, strength to our feet. And the city – this city that we love – will resume its great path. And this world

– for which God the Father gave His son Jesus, in whose blood we are all loved and saved – will resume its holy path, the path of peace.

Amen.
Don Mimmo Battaglia